



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 158

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, MARCH 26, 2012

No. 49

## Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, a Senator from the State of Connecticut.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, look beyond the harmful paths on which we have walked and see our spirits created in Your likeness and longing to commune with You.

Speak to our lawmakers today and teach them to listen through earthquakes, wind, and fire for Your still small voice. Guide them to learn the language of prayer and daily experience its power in their lives. May they be calm when You would have them listen and obedient when You would have them act, always eager to receive directions from You.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, March 26, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, a Senator from the State of Connecticut, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following any leader remarks the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 4:30 p.m. today. Following that morning business the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2204, the Repeal Big Oil Tax Subsidies Act. At 5:30 p.m. there will be up to two rollcall votes. The first vote will be a cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 2204. If cloture is not invoked, there will be a second cloture vote on the motion to proceed to the postal reform bill.

### MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 5, S. 2230, AND S. 2231

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there are three bills at the desk due for a second reading. I would like the clerk to report them if you so order.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bills by title for a second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5) to improve patient access to health care services and provide improved medical care by reducing the excessive burden the liability system places on the health care delivery system.

A bill (S. 2230) to reduce the deficit by imposing a minimum effective tax rate for high-income taxpayers.

A bill (S. 2231) to amend the Federal Credit Union Act, to advance the ability of credit unions to promote small business growth and economic development opportunities, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with regard to these three pieces of legislation.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

### TRANSPORTATION JOBS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, tens of thousands of bridges—70,000, to be exact—and millions of miles of roads across the country are in a state of disrepair. But rather than putting Americans to work fixing these roads and bridges—and, of course, repairing the crumbling train tracks, highways, and sidewalks across this country—House Republicans are pandering to the tea party. They cannot do a bill. They cannot do a bill. They have tried. They cannot do a bill. They are now not fighting us, they are fighting among themselves. As if putting the tea party ahead of efforts to repair our Nation's crumbling infrastructure was not bad enough, House Republicans are risking almost 3 million jobs in the process.

I was very disappointed last week to hear that the House Republican leaders hope to pursue a 3-month extension of the highway bill. That is, at this stage, without any suggestion that they would go to conference with us. It would seem to me that is the most practical thing to do—have a short-term extension and during the process work to see what we can come up with, working together. I know this is foreign language to what has gone on in the House in the last year and a half, but that would be a good idea—to try that, to work together to come up with a bill, a 2-year bill, a 3-year bill. Working together, we could do that on a bipartisan basis, as we did here. Their short-term bandaid bill is no solution. Communities and contractors need certainty—especially going into the summer construction season. We want to make sure projects do not grind to a halt in 3 months because the House once again refuses to act.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S2009